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ABSTRACT

Sixteen regional forums were held in Minnesota in the fall of 1995 to determine what form the Education and Employment Transition System, or School-to-Work System, mandated by state legislation, would take and which elements it should contain. Forum participants represented business, labor, education, parents, teachers, counselors, and other interested parties. Divided into nominal groups of 8-10 at each of the forums, the 673 participants considered 2 questions: "What would you do to establish school-to-work programs in your area?"; and, "Tell us how to prepare people of all ages for occupations." Seven areas were proposed as major parts of the effort: career education, system design, partnerships, skills and competencies identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, promotion, work-based learning, and staff development. Recommendations were made to incorporate these areas into a school-to-work system. (KC)

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The Report on the 1995 Regional School-To-Work Forums

A Report of the School-To-Work Roll-out Steering Committee to the Governor's Workforce Development Council

February 1996

A collaborative activity of
The Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning;
The Minnesota Department of Economic Security;
Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, and
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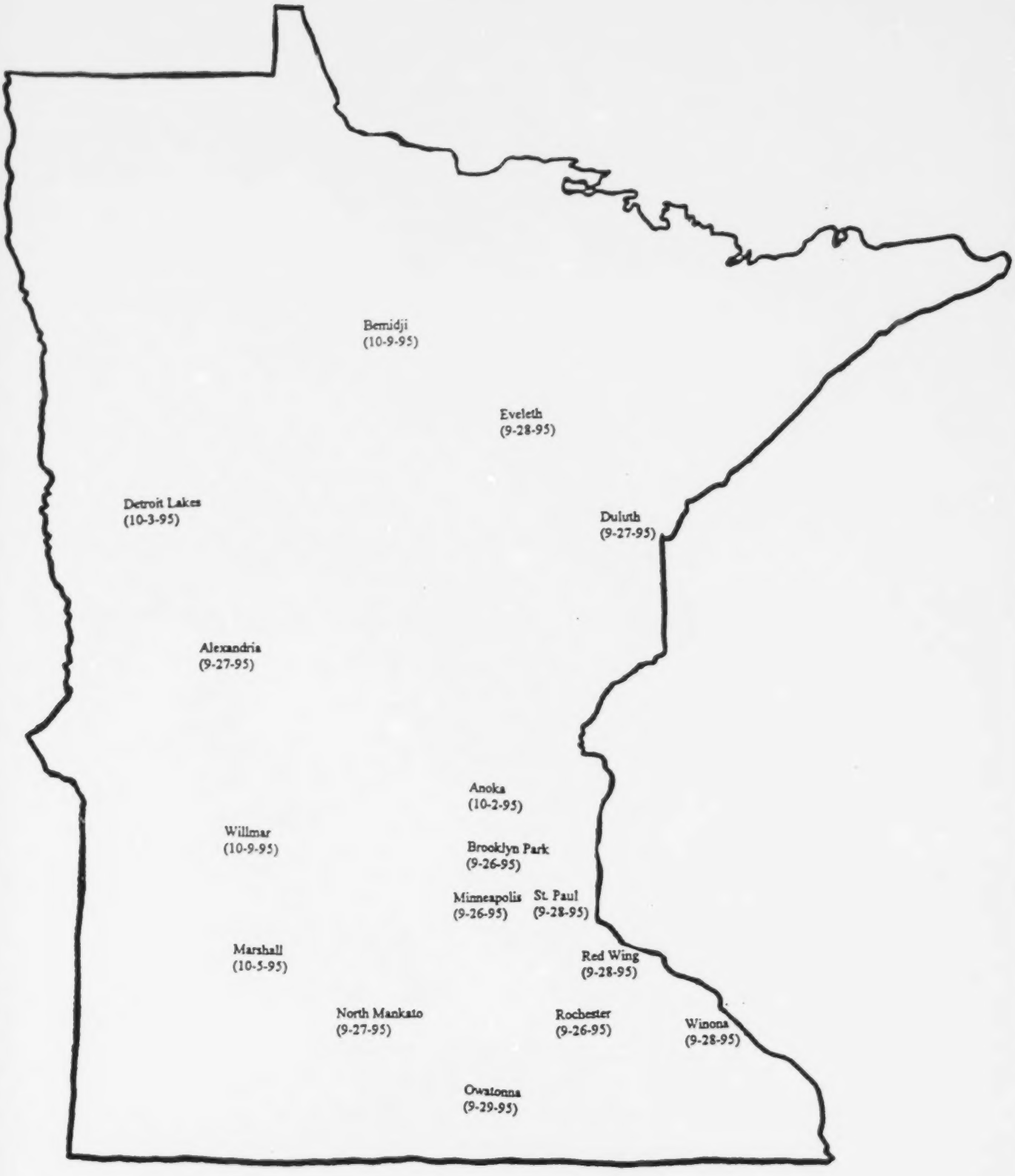
SITES AND DATES OF SCHOOL-TO-WORK FORUMS



The Report on the 1995 Regional School-To-Work Forums

February 1996

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INTRODUCTION

During its 1995 session, the Minnesota Legislature enacted legislation which was designed to create an education and employment (or school-to-work) transitions system. This new law, following other state and federal legislation which had created in Minnesota such programs as Youth Apprenticeships, youth programs under the Job Training Partnership Act and Tech Prep, called for the development of a comprehensive school-to-work system in Minnesota.

Governance for this new system was assigned to the Governor's Workforce Development Council. According to the legislation, this Council is to have oversight of numerous state and federal workforce related programs including School-to-Work, which is to be administered through the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

In August of 1995, the Director of the Office of Lifework Development in the Department of Children, Families and Learning suggested that the state agencies could best act as coaches and mentors for this system and that a "feel" from the local level was essential to the proposed development of any statewide system. With the intent to gain as much local input as possible, the Office of Lifework Development proposed that the Department of Children, Families and Learning, in collaboration with other key state agencies, conduct regional nominal group sessions to solicit the opinions of key local constituents. These sessions were designed to determine what form the Education and Employment Transition System, or School-to-Work System, should take and which elements it should contain. To that end, approximately 20 local agencies were asked to host forums of interested parties to discuss the issue.

In late September and early October, 16 regional forums were held throughout the state. Participants represented business, labor, education, parents, teachers, counselors and other interested parties and were invited to provide input and to discuss the key points of a school-to-work system in Minnesota. At each of these forums, the participants viewed a five minute videotaped message from Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson in which he explained the importance of local involvement in the design of a School-to-Work system for Minnesota and invited them to share their views during the forums. Following the Governor's message, those in attendance were given information on the Fall 1995 report of the Education and Employment Transitions Council.

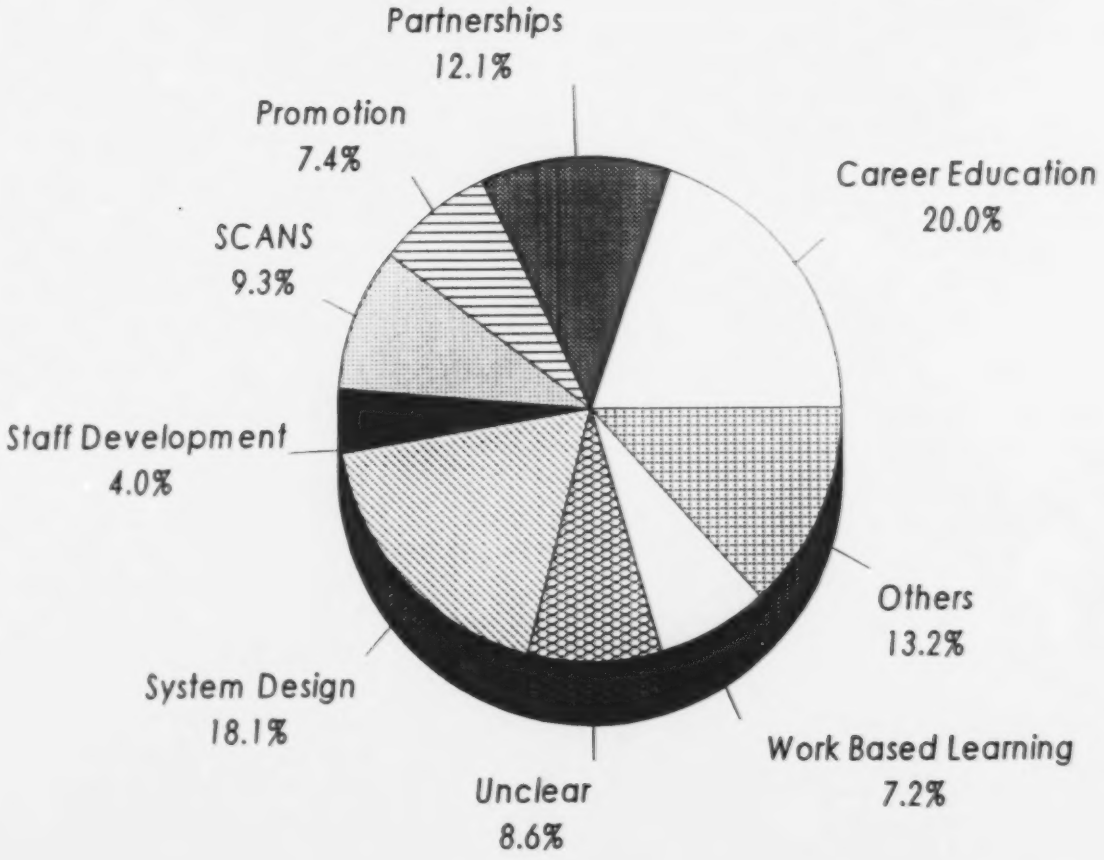
The participants were then divided into nominal groups of eight to ten individuals per group and asked to consider two requests:

- What would you do to establish School-to-Work in your area?
- Tell us how to prepare people of all ages for occupations.

When considering each of the requests, nominal group members were given eight to ten minutes to develop ideas which they recorded on sticky notes. At the end of this time period, each group member read his or her idea(s) aloud and the group decided on the placement of the suggestion on a flip chart page according to the similarity of suggestions. Some groups identified the themes that were addressed by the grouping of the notes, however, many groups did not identify themes. The raw output of this method was two flip chart pages per group—one for each of the questions—with each page covered with ten to twenty sticky notes, each note containing one or more suggestions.

Analysis of the participants' comments and suggestions was conducted by Mr. Duane Rominger, Mr. Leo Christenson, and Mr. Michael Ryan. This report is the result of their analysis of the information obtained from the 16 regional forums. It is in no way intended to represent a scientific sample, survey or conclusive summary of all of the components of a school-to-work system in Minnesota. However, it does, as originally intended, provide relevant input which policy makers and other interested parties should consider in the development of a comprehensive school-to-work system for the state.

Major Themes from School-to-Work Nominal Groups



Frequency of Themes from the School-to-Work Regional Forums

Theme	Raw Number	Percent of Total	Major Themes	Others
Adult Training	38	1.41%		1.41%
Applied Learning	81	3.00%		3.00%
At-Risk Services	16	0.59%		0.59%
Career Education	539	19.99%	19.99%	
Funding/Resources	66	2.45%		2.45%
Labor Market Information	32	1.19%		1.19%
Lifelong Learning	66	2.45%		2.45%
Parental Involvement	48	1.78%		1.78%
Partnerships	327	12.13%	12.13%	
Promotion	200	7.42%	7.42%	
Public Policy	10	0.37%		0.37%
SCANS	19	0.70%		
SCANS-Basic Skills	43	1.59%		
SCANS-Information	14	0.52%		
SCANS-Interpersonal Skills	42	1.56%		
SCANS-Personal Qualities	74	2.74%		
SCANS-Resources	5	0.19%		
SCANS-Soft Skills	20	0.74%		
SCANS-Technology	5	0.19%		
SCANS-Thinking Skills	29	1.08%		
All SCANS	*251*	*9.31%*	*9.31%*	
Staff Development	108	4.01%	4.01%	
System Design	59	2.19%		
System Design-Credit Transfer	7	0.26%		
System Design-Curriculum	154	5.71%		
System Design-Facilities	15	0.56%		
System Design-Governance	20	0.74%		
System Design-Planning	145	5.38%		
System Design-Scheduling	25	0.93%		
System Design-Standards	42	1.56%		
System Design-Transitions	20	0.74%		
All System Design	*487*	*18.06%*	*18.06%*	
Unclear	233	8.64%	8.64%	
Work-Based Learning	194	7.20%	7.20%	
Total =	**2696**	**100.00%**	**86.76%**	**13.24%**

Career Education

Definition Career education is the study of careers and the skills needed to (a) select a career; (b) select and complete appropriate education and training for a career; and (c) seek, gain, and secure employment in one's chosen career. Career education includes career awareness activities in the elementary grades and career exploration in the middle grades. For individuals in high school and beyond, assessment of vocational aptitude and interests are coupled with learning and utilizing the skills described above for career preparation. Career education can also be of some value to adults who find themselves at crossroads in their careers. Accurate and timely labor market information (LMI) is a necessary prerequisite for high quality career education. Thus, there is always some overlap between the theme of career education and the theme of labor market information. One current comprehensive term for career education and related activities is career development.

Discussion Twenty percent of all suggestions (539) pertained to career education in general; vocational counseling and vocational assessment were specifically recommended. The regional forum participants suggested that a comprehensive school-to-work system for people of all ages would have, as a central feature, a wide range of activities and services, all subsumed under the definition of career education.

"Make this your driving force: The integration of career education focused in classroom guidance units from teachers and counselors at the elementary school level and aptitude testing and career exploration units (i.e., career days, projects) at the middle school level."

Whether taught as separate subjects or infused into other educational subjects or endeavors—many comments addressed this dilemma—career education activities should be designed and delivered in an age-appropriate fashion. The following is a general reflection of how these were described by the forum participants.

For elementary school students:

- Exposure to and discussion of jobs and careers throughout their school day
- Slowly increasing the focus of the career awareness activities as the children move from grade to grade
- Learning that all jobs have value and all forms of education can lead to successful outcomes

For students in middle schools:

- Career exploration activities infused throughout the curriculum or as stand alone courses
- Career days, research projects, direct instruction on the concept of career clusters, some hands-on experiences in the tasks associated with careers or classes of careers
- Convenient access to information on individual careers and career clusters, such as job duties, working conditions, required education or training preparation, salary range, current and anticipated placement rates of recent trainees, and general health of the industry
- Learning that all jobs have value and all forms of education can lead to successful outcomes
- Increasing focus on decision-making and independent living skills within the curriculum
- School visits by parents, workers and employers to discuss their work and some visitation to work sites

"Provide students with developmental counseling activities that help them develop an understanding of self as it relates to work, develop decision-making skills related to careers, and teach them appropriate transition skills."

For secondary students:

- Rigorous career exploration activities, including classroom visits by employees and employers as well as work site tours
- Vocational aptitude and interest assessment coupled with career guidance counseling and the development of career plans
- Direct instruction in career decision-making skills, independent living skills, career research, research on education and training opportunities
- Convenient access to current labor market information
- Convenient access to information on individual careers and career clusters, including job duties, working conditions, required education or training preparation, salary range, current and anticipated placement rates of recent trainees, and general health of the industry
- Extensive use of work-based learning activities, such as job shadowing, mentorships, youth apprenticeships, tech prep, and cooperative education
- Service learning and experiential learning connected to the curriculum

For postsecondary students and adults:

- Convenient access to current labor market information across a variety of public venues—schools, workforce centers, libraries, and other sites

- Convenient access across a variety of public venues—schools, workforce centers, libraries, and other sites—to information on individual careers and career clusters, including job duties, working conditions, required education or training preparation, salary range, current and anticipated placement rates of recent trainees, and general health of the industry
- Convenient access to information on education programs and training opportunities across a variety of public venues—schools, workforce centers, public libraries, and other sites
- Access to vocational aptitude and interest assessment coupled with career guidance counseling
- Access to direct instruction in career decision-making skills, independent living skills, and skills in researching careers and education and training opportunities

"Adults need career assessment and counseling. There are not enough 'neutral offices' or career transition centers where adults may go and seek advice. Why not set up 'joint powers' centers operated by local schools and the job service to provide career assessment and counseling?"

It is important for the reader to understand that career education is *not* specific skill development for a career, such as welding or retail sales. Career education is the development of knowledge and skills in a class of behaviors that all persons must have to enter and succeed in the workplace. Thus career education is appropriate for *all* students and adults who must live independently as job holders in their lifetimes.

SYSTEM DESIGN

Definition System design is the category of comments which included specific ideas on how to create a school-to-work system in Minnesota. It includes the subheadings of:

- Curriculum
- Planning
- Standards
- Scheduling
- Governance
- Transitions
- Facilities
- Credit Transfer

"Change the current practice of separating work experience from classroom learning. Restructure curriculum and scheduling to accommodate school-to-work experiences."

Discussion More than 18.1% (487) of the responses addressed system design issues. It is not surprising that almost one in five statements suggested ways to build a school-to-work system since the forum questions focused on these issues. Curriculum at 5.7% (154) and planning at 5.4% (145) of overall responses were the most frequently cited categories of system design. The remainder of the categories composed the rest of the system design responses.

The breadth of system design categories imply that there are a variety of details and issues that must be considered when creating and operating a school-to-work system. These issues range from governance to facilities. The frequency and specificity of these responses indicate that many local residents have the ideas needed to begin establishing a school-to-work system. This might be viewed as a call for business and education to move beyond the discussion phase into actually planning and implementing a school-to-work system throughout Minnesota.

"For this to succeed, both the school and work components must have equal value."

Partnerships

Definition A partnership is a local, regional, or state-level collaborative relationship among public job services, secondary and postsecondary education, parents, students, employers, labor organizations, and others in the community which designs and operates a school-to-work system serving all individuals from elementary-school age through retirement age. Such partnerships are also called multi-sector partnerships or collaborative efforts.

Discussion More than 12.1% (325) of the comments from the forum participants illustrated the importance of multi-sector partnerships in the development and implementation of a school-to-work system. Several comments recognized the difficulty in creating collaborative working relationships among stakeholder groups and agencies with no previous history of working together. Participants suggested that partnerships would require some training of the potential partners in an effort to ensure the success of the school-to-work system.

"Local communities need technical assistance from somewhere (the state?) to:

1) ***help them identify school-to-work partners;***
2) ***train them to create and nurture partnerships; and***
3) ***help them develop indicators for assessing and improving the partnerships."***

Most of the comments described the need for a local collaborative that included *all* parties potentially affected by a comprehensive school-to-work system—students, parents, teachers, employers, labor organizations, local employment and training staff, and representatives from community-based organizations. Participants suggested that the collaborative conduct a needs assessment throughout the community to determine how a local school-to-work system can best meet the needs of the diverse community stakeholders.

The forum participants also proposed that the results of the needs assessment should then be used as a basis for the design of a school-to-work system that satisfies the unique needs of the locality or region. Several participants mentioned the need to align programs and curricula with the requirements of a changing workforce and the evolving needs of local businesses and industries.

> ***"Some geographic areas have created cooperatives or consortia of educators and businesses—such as the tech prep consortia—which have been successful. Building on these groups would avoid re-doing something that is already successful."***

The regional forum participants were also aware that multi-sector partnerships have been developed previously. Several individuals proposed that localities could dovetail their school-to-work efforts with these more mature initiatives rather than developing new local collaboratives that compete for community members' time and energy.

SCANS

Definition SCANS is an acronym for the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. In 1991, the U.S. Department of Labor began publishing the reports of this commission. The first SCANS report, *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report of America 2000*, identified three foundational and five general competencies workers needed to perform effectively in current and emerging jobs.

The *Foundation Competencies* require:

- **Basic Skills** - reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking and listening;
- **Thinking Skills** - thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, and reasoning; and
- **Personal Qualities** - individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity.

Competencies for Effective Workers are:

- **Resources** - allocating, time, money, materials, space, and staff;
- **Interpersonal Skills** - working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds;
- **Information** - acquiring and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating, and using computers to process information;
- **Systems** - understanding social, organizational, and technological systems, monitoring and correcting performance, and designing and improving systems; and
- **Technology** - Selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, and maintaining troubleshooting technologies.

"Skills may not be as important as integrating into students an 'attitude' about different kinds of work and the individual's self-responsibility for his or her job future and tapping into all resources and education and training opportunities."

Discussion More than 250 or 9.3% of all comments related to the general topic of SCANS as well as the three Foundation Competencies and the eight Competencies for Effective Workers. The most frequently cited SCANS category was Personal Qualities, making up 2.7% (74) of overall responses. The next most frequent SCANS responses were (a) Basic Skills with 1.6% (43) of responses, (b) Interpersonal Skills with 1.6% (42) of responses, and (c) Thinking Skills with 1.1% (29) of responses. Comments related to these four SCANS categories together composed 75% (188) of the SCANS responses and 7% of overall responses. Comments related to SCANS in general and the remaining four categories composed the remaining 63 responses.

"Adaptability is one of the common traits of a successful employee. It is difficult to teach but must be stressed."

> ***"Work with people to develop their ability to think and apply theories, not just memorize routine tasks and facts. Being able to solve problems is the basis for success."***

SCANS made up almost one out of every ten responses. This indicates that educators and employers find SCANS to be a useful tool to describe the skills students and workers need to be successful in school and at work. In addition, respondents cited the specific SCANS skills categories at a higher frequency than the overall category of SCANS. This indicates that respondents are familiar with the details of SCANS and how it can be applied in the classroom and workplace. It also suggests that respondents recognize the need for students and workers to have a mix of soft skills like integrity and teamwork and as well as hard skills like evaluating data and applying technology. It seems that respondents believe that SCANS provides a strong framework for curriculum and assessment in a school-to-work system.

Promotion

Definition Promotion is a sustained public information campaign to build public awareness and support for the school-to-work system.

> ***"We need a media campaign to get out the real story — Education and Employment: What Are The Real Needs in the State of Minnesota?"***

Discussion More than 7.4% (200) of the total suggestions addressed the need for promotional and marketing activities to help local communities and the state see the benefits of a comprehensive community-wide school-to-work system. The participants clearly stated that local needs assessment—determining accurately the local or regional needs of all potential partners or stakeholders with respect to their understanding of a school-to-work system—is a necessary feature of any promotional campaign. Many individuals at the forums responded that the success of a school-to-work initiative would rely heavily on changing the perceptions of parents and their children with respect to their beliefs that four-year college or university education is a prerequisite for career success. Several participants mentioned utilizing the skills and charisma of such speakers as Dr. Will Daggett in spreading the message that the great majority of careers do not now and will not in the future require a four-year degree.

"Communicate the need for a shift in focus—think careers instead of college. There are many paths to reach a career goal."

Other forum participants noted that getting people to think of the whole community as the appropriate venue for all school-to-work related activities will also take a large and sustained marketing or promotional campaign. Several persons at the forums suggested that the marketing campaign would need to explain to each of the stakeholder groups how they would receive some benefit from participating in the design and delivery of a comprehensive school-to-work effort.

Work-Based Learning

Definition The American Vocational Association defines work-based learning by stating that: "Through collaborative partnerships between schools and employers, students can gain practical work and learning experience outside the walls of educational institutions" (Brustein, B. & Mahler, M. 1994. *AVA Guide to the School-to-Work Opportunities Act*. Alexandria, VA: American Vocational Association, P. 20). Work-based learning activities (paid and non-paid) can include job shadowing, youth apprenticeship, workplace mentoring, internships, school-based enterprises, and on-the-job instruction.

Discussion The nearly 200 suggestions concerning work-based learning activities composed 7.2% of all comments from the forum participants. Work-based learning was seen as an essential element in promoting the connection between school and work in the minds of students, parents, and teachers. Attendants at the regional forums declared that work-based learning was necessary in order for students to connect the full range of academic and vocational subjects they are learning in school with their future adult careers. Work-based learning is also consistent with literature on the transfer of training suggesting that effective transfer of training is dependent, in part, on the extent to which the training occurs in an environment exactly like or approximately like the environment where the new skills will be put to use.

"Locate more classes outside the school to model to teachers and students that such learning is valued and is equal to what happens in class."

In addition, forum participants suggested that the entire community should be seen as the appropriate venue for a wide range of educational activities. Service learning was suggested as a type

of work-based learning with many benefits equivalent to those of traditional work-based learning activities, such as cooperative vocational education. This may be an especially attractive option for communities with few work-sites available for internships and apprenticeships.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Definition Staff development furnishes training and learning opportunities for staff already employed in an organization providing school-to-work services. This primarily addresses the training needs of educators to aid them in understanding and applying the ideas, strategies, and processes required to develop, implement, evaluate, and continuously improve a school-to-work system.

Discussion Four percent (108) of the responses identified staff development as crucial to developing and implementing a school-to-work system in Minnesota. Most statements focused on providing teachers with an understanding of business employment needs and processes. These responses suggested that teachers need ongoing opportunities to see how their curriculum is used in a work setting. Teachers need to then use this knowledge to make their classes more "hands-on" and relevant.

"Retrain teachers to develop new teaching methods which reflect the needs of school-to-work."

Many responses also addressed the need to help business learn about educational needs and processes. These responses indicate that if businesses and employers are going to successfully partner with schools, they need to understand how schools work. Responses suggested that employers work directly with administrators, teachers, and students to learn about schools and to share their expertise with the schools.

"Have hands-on learning at business sites in order to develop real world experience (work ethics, etc.), knowledge of current technology used in business, and to provide a daily link between school and business in the minds of students."

Overall, respondents believed that everyone involved with state and local school-to-work partnerships needed new knowledge and skills to collaboratively create a school-to-work system that ensures future work success for Minnesotans of all ages. This skill development is not a one time

"Provide funds, experience, and training to educate teachers how business works and business people how education works."

occurrence. Instead it is an ongoing requirement of operating a high quality school-to-work system that remains current with the needs of students, workers, and employers.

Minor Themes

While the analysts set an arbitrary level of about 3.7% (or 100 comments) in identifying major themes for this report, the other themes identified during the analysis deserve some discussion. Comments which discussed **Applied Learning** accounted for 3% (81) of the suggestions. Applied learning is teaching and learning conducted in the real-life context of how the subject matter is actually applied outside of the school. Daily problems and examples in such academic subjects as physics, chemistry, mathematics, and written and verbal communications are drawn from the application of their principles in the world of work. Applied learning is also often called applied academics or contextual learning.

The need for youth and adults to understand the requirements for **Lifelong Learning** throughout their careers was addressed by 2.5% of the comments. Lifelong learning is the concept that individuals or employees should be prepared, willing, and able to access educational and training services through their workplace, public services, and public and private postsecondary education throughout their lives. Current literature on the workplace suggests that persons must engage in lifelong learning to simply keep the jobs they have and to remain current in their occupations. Another 2.5% of the comments discussed the need for a strategy to address **Funding and Resources** to support a school-to-work initiative. This theme includes all comments referring to federal, state, or local funding.

In smaller numbers, the regional forum participants made suggestions on the use of **Labor Market Information** to support a school-to-work initiative, **Adult Training** opportunities for those individuals in need of further training after some time in the workplace, and the importance of **Parental Involvement** in the design and realization of a school-to-work system. A few comments stressed the need for **At-Risk Services** to aid members of special population or those with special needs to succeed in a school-to-work system. A few comments suggested the need for a review of **Public Policy** to determine whether existing legislation and regulations may hinder the implementation of school-to-work, locally or state-wide, and to discover whether changes in public policy may be required to increase the leverage required for its acceptance and accomplishment.

In addition, the analysts determined that more than 8.6% (233) of the comments were sufficiently **Unclear** that the analysts could not place them under a theme. Comments that were incomplete, could not be understood by the analysts, or would require leading assumptions by the analysts before coding were put in this category.

Conclusions

1. **Career Education** Through 20% of their responses, the participants in the regional forums clearly stated that easily accessible career education for adults and children is the most important feature of a systemic school-to-work initiative for people of all ages in the State of Minnesota. This includes career awareness activities for elementary school students, career exploration for middle school students, and focused career research for high school and postsecondary students, coupled with vocational aptitude and interest assessment and counseling. For the adult population, this term includes, but is not limited to, access to vocational aptitude and interest assessment, vocational counseling, accurate and timely materials for the study of careers, and access to local, regional, and state labor market information.

2. **System Design** More than 18% of all comments from the participants at the regional forums suggested elements for the design of a school-to-work system in Minnesota. While most of these comments discussed curriculum and planning concerns (5.7% and 5.4%, respectively), the regional forum respondents also addressed course credit transfer, use of facilities, governance, scheduling, program standards, and transitional activities.

3. **Partnerships** The respondents identified partnerships in more than 12% of their comments as the third most important consideration in the design of a school-to-work system in Minnesota. Their suggestions included, but were not limited to, the inclusion of business and labor, parents, educators, employment and training services, and the entire community in the design and implementation of the initiative. Several suggestions addressed the need for training partnership members in developing and maintaining successful partnerships.

4. **SCANS** The three foundational and five general competencies, first identified and discussed in 1991 in the U.S. Department of Labor report, *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000*, were seen by the respondents as still current and vital outcomes for all clients of a school-to-work system in Minnesota. In more than 9% of their comments, the participants described the SCANS skills, often specifically mentioning SCANS in their descriptions.

5. **Promotion** Nearly 7.5% of the comments addressed the need for aggressive and continuous promotion to ensure understanding and acceptance of a comprehensive school-to-work system by students, educators, parents, employers, workers, and the community.

6. **Work-Based Learning** More than 7% of all comments addressed the need for more learning to take place at work sites where the skills being learned will be put to immediate use. This will reinforce the connections between students' education and the world of work.

7. **Staff Development** Four percent of all comments addressed the need for *all* educators—teachers, administrators, and teacher educators—to receive training to help them understand and establish effectively the new school-to-work system model to ensure its successful and long-term implementation in public education. The forum participants clearly believed that everyone involved with state and local school-to-work partnerships needed new knowledge and skills to collaboratively create a school-to-work system that ensures future career success for Minnesotans of all ages.

Recommendations

1. **The school-to-work system in Minnesota should have permanent, easily-accessible career education for individuals of all ages as a pervasive feature.**
All public education and employment and training services should have career education as a central feature of their efforts. All citizens of Minnesota should be able to access and easily utilize the full range of career development services—including vocational counseling, self-assessment, and labor market information—through a variety of venues.

2. **The school-to-work system in Minnesota should be developed using a clear design process which involves and collaborates with all state and local stakeholders.**
Frank and comprehensive discussions among all interested and affected state and local organizations is essential to the design and implementation of a comprehensive school-to-work system. Planning should include discussions concerning the best use and coordination of existing programs and resources to ensure that the system meets the needs of as many Minnesotans as possible.

3. **The school-to-work system in Minnesota should be designed and implemented by actual and effective multi-sector partnerships, composed of <u>all</u> appropriate stakeholders.**
A broad array of Minnesotans should be involved in the structural design, implementation, and maintenance of the school-to-work system. Some resources behind the school-to-work initiative could be used to support needs assessment activities and training in effective collaboration among the diverse and independent groups. Local and statewide creation of a

comprehensive school-to-work system will likely be a direct result of the effectiveness with which these collaboratives develop and operate.

4. **One of the major outcomes of the school-to-work system in Minnesota should be the clear and comprehensive understanding and common use of the competencies identified by the SCANS Report.**
All public education and job training activities should have among their goals the achievement or mastery of the SCANS competencies, regardless of the educational or training venue. All educators and trainers should be able to describe to students and observers, at any point in time during their courses or programs, which of the SCANS competencies are being addressed by the current lesson. All students and trainees should be able to identify how the subject matter of any educational or training effort supports their acquisition and mastery of these competencies.

5. **In order to achieve the level of buy-in by all constituencies required for its success, school-to-work must be aggressively and continuously promoted to students, parents, teachers, employers, and the community.**
The success of a school-to-work effort in Minnesota will require a substantial investment in the effective and continuous promotion of its vision, mission, and goals.

6. **All secondary and postsecondary vocational technical education and public employment and training programs should have an effective, required work-based component.**
Familiarity with the workplace through first-hand experience is critical for a smooth school-to-work transition. Learning activities conducted at the workplace prepare students of a school-to-work system for such activities throughout their careers. Several participants at the forums suggested that work-based learning should be a requirement for all students of secondary and postsecondary education, since all students, regardless of their academic interests, will eventually enter the workplace.

7. **Professional development should be provided for everyone involved with designing and operating the school-to-work system in Minnesota, especially educators and employers.**
For school-to-work to be successful, the lens through which educators and employers view education must be transformed into a new model of education which views applied learning, career education, and work based learning as essential to the success of their efforts. This cannot be done without extensive and effective professional development.

Comments on the Analysis of the Information Collected from the School-to-Work Regional Forums

The information in this document is an attempt to classify nearly 2700 comments of the 673 participants at 16 school-to-work regional forums held throughout the state of Minnesota between September 27 and October 9, 1995. These meetings can best be characterized as information-gathering and the results reported in this document should not be portrayed as the results of carefully designed research. The forum facilitators were selected from among several agencies and constituencies known to the members of the School-to-Work Roll-out Steering Committee. These facilitators then selected nominal group facilitators for the forums from among individuals known to them. The persons who attended these forums were, by and large, invited to participate or heard of the forums through word of mouth.

No demographic information was collected on the forum participants to determine if they were relatively representative of potential stakeholder groups in a future school-to-work initiative or generally representative of the citizens of Minnesota. Despite group facilitator training conducted several weeks prior to the beginning of the forums, there was considerable variation within and across sites in the conduct of the forum and the nominal groups. The facilitators at one of the sites unilaterally changed the wording of the questions posed to the nominal groups at that site, although the analysts judged that the comments, suggestions, and themes did not *appear* to be significantly different from those from other sites. The method used for analyzing the comments was developed after the completion of the forums by the three member analysis team, which was also selected after the completion of the forums.

The three member analysis team requested access to all original sticky notes (also known as snow cards) and flip chart pages—the raw output from the nominal groups—to use in their analysis of the comments. These materials were not provided to the analysis team from three of the sites. Instead, the information was transcripted at the direction of the forum facilitator of those three sites and the transcripts of the comments were provided to the analysis team. Thus, the analysis team can make no personal assurances as to the accuracy of some of the comments counted among the total.

However, the reader can be assured that most of the comments and suggestions were accurately transcripted under the direct supervision of one or more members of the analysis team. The three-member analysis team made more than 2700 separate decisions concerning appropriate coding of comments within representative themes. The analyst did not impose the themes on the comments but allowed these themes to arise from the comments. In cases where early apparent themes did not persist during the coding of the comments, many comments were reviewed and subsequently re-coded. The

analysts made every effort to ensure that the themes accurately reflected the comments and that the results of this analysis—on which the conclusion and recommendations are based—are free from bias or hidden agenda.

It is important also to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Jo Oeltjen and Sue Patterson, both of the Office of Lifework Development, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, in the successful completion of this project. Ms. Oeltjen, Youth Apprenticeship Programs Coordinator, provided important technical assistance on the database software used to organize the comments as well as to calculate the raw counts and frequencies of the comments. Ms. Patterson accurately and cheerfully entered all 2700 comments into the database and produced the reports on which the table and chart are based. In addition, Ms. Patterson produced the map of the forum sites that appears at the beginning of this report. The analysis team and the School-to-Work Roll-out Steering Committee appreciate the contribution of these two individuals to the completion and quality of this report.

Finally, the School-to-Work Roll-out Steering Committee is indebted to the 673 individuals committed enough to the improvement of the student and client outcomes of vocational technical education and workforce development that they took time from their schedules to attend the 16 regional forums and contribute their suggestions for the design of a comprehensive school-to-work system for Minnesotans of all ages. The Committee also extends its appreciation to the forum site and group facilitators for their dedication and hard work during this project.

Appendix A

Attendance at the School-to-Work Roll-out Forums

Forum Site	Attendance
Alexandria	20
Anoka	27
Bemidji	30
Detroit Lakes	35
Duluth	42
Eveleth (Virginia)	51
Hennepin County	40
Mankato	58
Marshall	26
Minneapolis	100
Owatonna	47
Red Wing	8
Rochester	52
St. Paul	60
Willmar	37
Winona	40
Total =	673

Appendix B

The School-to-Work Roll-out Steering Committee

Cox, Robert - Team Leader, Office of Lifework Development, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Ingvalson, Lezlie - Secondary Vocational Education Special Needs Specialist. Office of State and Federal Programs, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Jackson, Kathy - Senior Field Representative, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry

Johnson, Ron - Secondary Vocational Education Federal Aid Specialist, Office of State and Federal Programs, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Monson, Jerald - Partnership Development Coordinator, Office of Lifework Development, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Nauth, Bruce - Tech Prep/School-To-Work Director for PostSecondary, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Oeltjen, Jo - Youth Apprenticeship Programs Coordinator, Office of Lifework Development, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Olson, John - Youth Programs Analyst, Minnesota Department of Economic Security

Ryerson, Tom - Tech Prep/Technology Education Specialist, Office of Lifework Development Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Strom, Thomas, Chairman, Coordinator of Service Learning, Office of Lifework Development Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Tracy, Kay - Director of Youth Programs, Minnesota Department of Economic Security

Wells, Chip - Director, City of Minneapolis Employment and Training